

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 27-38 and 42 stand rejected, with claims 1-26 and 39-41 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-26 and 39-41 have been cancelled without prejudice, claims 27-38 and 42 amended and newly written claim 43 offered for consideration. Accordingly, claims 27-38, 42 and 43 are the only claims remaining in this application.

The Examiner's indication that the drawings filed March 5, 2001 are acceptable is appreciated. Additionally, the Examiner's acknowledgment of applicants' claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document is also appreciated. Finally, the Examiner's consideration of the prior art submitted in applicants' Information Disclosure Statement is also appreciated.

Claims 27-38 and 42 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Ooi (U.S. Patent 5,917,628) in view of Logan (U.S. Patent 5,204,640). Applicants' independent claim 1, and indeed all other claims, comprise an apparatus and method for stabilizing the output frequency from a laser source of radiation.

Neither Ooi nor Logan are directed towards stabilizing the frequency of a laser's output radiation. In fact, the Examiner admits that this is the case with respect to the Ooi reference in his statement that the "feedback means for feeding back the output difference signal" in the Ooi reference "is not connected to the laser." In fact, Ooi is only directed towards time division multiplexing in which the laser output frequency varies with data supplied (see column 7, lines 3-5). Thus, Ooi does not provide a frequency stable laser output. Ooi does teach phase differences between signals that can be stabilized, but

requires an additional low frequency oscillator in order to stabilize the relative phase difference (see column 3, lines 33-29).

The Logan reference is a widely tunable oscillator which is stabilized. However, Logan deals with a tunable electronic oscillator and not the frequency of a laser source. While Figures 3a-c do teach control of a mode locked laser, it is the repetition frequency of the laser pulses (not the frequency of the laser light) which is controlled, not the output frequency of the radiation. Moreover, applicants' independent claim 27 specifies an optical phase detector, and there is no such disclosure in the Logan reference.

In view of the above, neither Ooi nor Logan by themselves or in combination teach any structure for stabilizing the output frequency of a laser source of radiation. Furthermore, the Ooi and Logan references are incompatible in that Logan is a mode locked laser and Ooi teaches a time division multiplexer. Ooi specifically requires the modulation of a laser output, whereas Logan teaches a precisely "locked" repetition rate of its laser. As a result, even if one wanted to, the Logan and Ooi references could not be combined.

The Patent Office has failed to show how or where all structures in applicants' independent claims or claims dependent thereon are shown or rendered obvious in at least one of the two cited references. Moreover, the Examiner has provided no motivation for combining these two references and indeed, as noted above, the references would actually lead one of ordinary skill in the art away from their combination. As a result, there is no

prima facie basis for obviousness under 35 USC §103 and any further rejection thereunder is respectfully traversed.

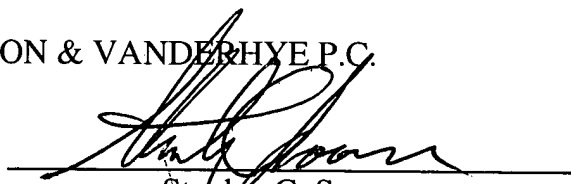
Applicants have made a number of minor corrections in the remaining claims to eliminate reference numbers and to place the claims more in accord with U.S. patent claiming practices. Applicants have also added newly written claim 43 directed to the broad apparatus claim in non- "means-plus-function" format. Entry and consideration of newly written claim 43 is respectfully requested.

Having responded to all objections and rejections set forth in the outstanding Official Action, it is submitted that pending claims 27-38, 42 and 43 are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. In the event the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of one or more of the above claims, he is respectfully requested to contact applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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